CROYDON PHILATELIC SOCIETY:
NOTES ON THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH FEBRUARY 2018:

President Richard West welcomed the 15 members to the meeting on 13th February 2018 at 14.30 hours. He introduced **Don Davies** and invited him to give his presentation on '**Great Britain Postal History with a Difference:**

Don began by looking behind the scenes of postal history. Before 1839 letters were mainly commercial rather than personal. Private carriers were cheaper than the post office. Postage was usually claimed from the recipient.

Postal rates were covered comprehensively by Don including unusual addresses on letters including one addressed to the Chief Constables at the Black Bull and another to No.4, near the bridge, London. Examples of curiously shaped letters folded in the shape of triangles, diamonds or even hexagonals were displayed . Triangular ones were often apologies.

Rowland Hill thought that the Mulready prepaid letter sheet, introduced at the same time as the penny black, would be the most popular with the public. However it was despised and ridiculed and within one year was replaced by the pre-paid envelope.

The Mulready was supposed to be cancelled by the Maltese Cross over Britannia. This apparently caused difficulties as we were shown one Mulready which had been cancelled 8 times as the postal clerk apparently couldn't decide which image was Britannia so he cancelled them all. The penny black was universally accepted and copied worldwide. Indeed many stamps are still of a similar size and design as witnessed by the Machins in the UK.

A variety of ways for addressing envelopes were shown – descriptive addresses; with reference to landmarks; the person's name and town; and the profession of the recipient. Postcodes were developed in the 1850's when London was split into ten districts with each district being given a number.

The last two frames were devoted to Machin forgeries – a problem that the Post Office is still dealing with!!

There was a large variety of material, well written up and accompanied by an interesting commentary. Members enjoyed viewing the material and President Richard thanked Don for an enjoyable afternoon. The meeting closed at 16.30 hours.

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Graham Harker
Honorary Assistant Secretary